

**To:** StClair, Christie[StClair.Christie@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]  
**From:** Ethan Barton  
**Sent:** Thur 3/17/2016 5:18:23 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Navajo president comments

Great, thanks Christie.

On Thu, Mar 17, 2016 at 1:14 PM, StClair, Christie <StClair.Christie@epa.gov> wrote:

Hi Ethan,

Please attribute to an agency spokeswoman:

1. 1. He told me that reported, successful Navajo suicides spiked since the spill, though he couldn't establish a direct correlation.

No comment

2. 2. Begaye also said the EPA isn't holding up to its promises, isn't monitoring the soil and water as promised, and is using a water quality standard that allows for many more contaminants than what is typically allowed for agriculture and drinking. He noted that consistent monitoring and guidance is critical, as farmers will soon need to rely on the contaminated rivers as irrigation sources.

EPA performed the first round of monitoring in October and November in accordance with the September 2015 draft "Post Gold King Mine Release Incident: Conceptual Monitoring Plan for Surface Water, Sediment and Biology." Under the plan, EPA is examining water quality, sediment quality, biological community and fish tissue under a variety of flow conditions at 26 sites, across seasonal conditions. The sites are located within Colorado, Southern Ute Indian Reservation, New Mexico, Ute Mountain Ute Reservation, the Navajo Nation and Utah, spanning Cement Creek, the Animas and San Juan rivers, and the upper section of Lake Powell.

Metals that could pose a risk to human safety at high concentrations were tested against the agency's risk-based recreational screening levels. The conservative screening values assume adults and children who are hiking and camping near the river receive all of their daily water intake from the river over a 64-day period each year for a combined thirty year period.

All metals, at all sampling sites, were below these risk-based recreational screening levels. Under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and state water quality standards, metals must be effectively treated and removed from source water used as a drinking water supply.

The agency has provided the data to the Navajo Nation so that they can compare them to the Nation's standards for agriculture. The agency has also compared data for the stretch of the San Juan River on Navajo Nation to Navajo Nation's agricultural standards, and shared that analysis with the Tribe. On August 24, 2015, Navajo Nation President Begaye reported that the Navajo Nation EPA had determined the water from the San Juan River was safe for irrigation purposes. On August 28, the President lifted irrigation restrictions on the San Juan River for the Chapters of Upper Fruitland, San Juan and Nenahnezad Chapters.

Before using the river this spring for recreation, irrigation, agriculture and drinking, local residents should consult local health authorities about normal precautions that result from seasonal changes to the Rivers.

EPA, States, Tribes and local Governments are working together to determine the next steps for monitoring.

3. 3. Begaye also said he doesn't expect the Navajo Nation and affected farmers will receive full compensation from the EPA for the spill, which he estimated to be about \$1 million.

On March 10, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provided \$157,756 to Navajo Nation government agencies for costs incurred during the response to the August 2015 Gold King Mine release.

The reimbursement is for costs incurred by Navajo from August 5 to September 2, 2015 and includes: \$42,138 for drinking water; \$31,116 for installing a fiber optic cable that provided needed internet access to the Navajo Nation Emergency Operations Center; \$63,824 for sampling and supplies and \$20,678 for labor, travel and supplies to support the delivery of hay and agricultural water. This funding reimburses Navajo government agencies for certain costs incurred responding to the incident that are eligible under EPA's response authorities and allowable under federal grant principles. EPA is continuing to review other response costs submitted by Navajo Nation.

Through a separate process, EPA is continuing to review individual claims asserted pursuant to the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA).

EPA is making \$2 million available for State and Tribal grant application to perform monitoring to address both early warning and seasonal monitoring. EPA continues to work with States and Tribes on any additional monitoring needs.

**Christie St. Clair**

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**From:** Ethan Barton [mailto:[ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org](mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org)]

**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2016 10:03 AM

**To:** StClair, Christie <[StClair.Christie@epa.gov](mailto:StClair.Christie@epa.gov)>

**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy <[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov](mailto:Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: Navajo president comments

Great, thanks Christie.

On Thu, Mar 17, 2016 at 10:02 AM, StClair, Christie <[StClair.Christie@epa.gov](mailto:StClair.Christie@epa.gov)> wrote:

Hey Ethan,

Back to you shortly.

Christie

**Christie St. Clair**

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**From:** Ethan Barton [mailto:[ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org](mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org)]

**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2016 9:55 AM

**To:** Press <[Press@epa.gov](mailto:Press@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** Navajo president comments

Hello,

I'm seeking EPA comment on some things Navajo President Russell Begaye told me in an interview about the Gold King Mine spill on the Navajo nation.

He told me that reported, successful Navajo suicides spiked since the spill, though he couldn't establish a direct correlation.

Begaye also said the EPA isn't holding up to its promises, isn't monitoring the soil and water as promised, and is using a water quality standard that allows for many more contaminants than what is typically allowed for agriculture and drinking. He noted that consistent monitoring and guidance is critical, as farmers will soon need to rely on the contaminated rivers as irrigation sources.

Begaye also said he doesn't expect the Navajo Nation and affected farmers will receive full compensation from the EPA for the spill, which he estimated to be about \$1 million.

My deadline is 1 pm today.

Thank you,

Ethan

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